



RRT VI SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING **25 JANUARY 2005**

CAPT Branch opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions and discussed main points covered from Executive Secretariat Meeting. Mr. Ragan Broyles also welcomed RRT members and thanked them for coming to the meeting:

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDEES

CAPT Ron Branch – RRT 6 Co-Chair
CDR Nathalie Valley – Alt. Co-Chair
Mr. Welcome Duncan – USCG Coordinator
Mr. George Allman – EPA RRT (Liaison)
Mr. Robert Hendrix – FEMA (DHS)
Mr. Steve Spencer – DOI
Mr. Charlie Henry – DOC (NOAA)
Mr. Luis Villanueva – DOL
Mr. Jeff Meyers – LADEQ
Ms. Karolien DeBusschere – LOSCO
Mr. Greg Pollock – TGLO

Mr. Ragan Broyles – RRT 6 Co-Chair
Mr. Craig Carroll – Alt. Co-Chair
Mr. Steve Mason – EPA Coordinator
Mr. William Gibson – DOE
Ms. Lorie LaFon – FEMA (DHS)
Mr. Royce Swayne – DOD (ACOE)
LCOL Jose Velazquez – DOD (5th Army)
Mr. Dan Crawford – GSA
Ms. Karen Price – LADEQ
Mr. Jeff Lewellin – TCEQ
Mr. Bill Meyer - TRRC

FEDERAL AGENCY REPORTS

EPA; Mr. Craig Carroll

EPA Identified four major, current response sites and discussed Steve Mason's initiation of the Emergency Response Review program which is an "After Action" documentation process that will be posted on EPA's website. Mr. Carroll also talked about three areas of concern for EPA Region VI: notification procedures, ICS (NIMS) implementation, and response criteria. In addition, EPA is considering a national approach to their response policy (workforce consolidation) and evaluating data management resources.

Coast Guard; Deferred until COTP reports in the FOSC presentations later on in meeting

Dept of Commerce; Mr. Charlie Henry

NOAA has reworked the response and Natural Restoration Damage Assessment divisions. This reorganization allows NOAA to better serve their customers. There is a new initiative in Texas called the "Joint Focus Group." This group will be hosting a damage assessment workshop on April 7, 2005, in Corpus Christi, TX. This workshop will include Federal, State and Industry partners to discuss more streamlined methods of conducting damage/restoration assessments.

Dept of Interior; Dr. Steven Spencer

DOI was very busy during the hurricane season, especially for Hurricane Ivan. The agency was protecting endangered species, other wildlife and refuge resources. He thanked MSO New Orleans, commanded by CAPT Paskewich, for their assistance in providing personnel and financial (PRFA) assistance towards the protection of Delta Wildlife Refuge and other island habitats during oil spill responses.

Dr. Spencer talked about department initiatives. One such program was developing a plan addressing all hazards and putting together a team to work with this issue. Dr. Spencer was appointed to this team as the Region VI representative. Dr. Spencer introduced Mr. Todd Reber who is the new emergency responder for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in New Mexico. Mr. William Walker, BIA, has been promoted to superintendent of the Mescalero Indian reservation near Ruidoso, NM.

Dept of Energy; Mr. William “HOOT” Gibson

DOE has a new management staff in Washington D.C., under the direction of Dr. Bodman who is awaiting Congressional confirmation. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is working towards the Presidential mandate of 700 million barrels for U.S. reserves. Current capacity is 675 million barrels. SPR is continuing to work with the Coast Guard on port security issues.

Dept of Agriculture – No Report

Dept of Defense; LCOL Jose Velazquez, Fifth Army

Mr. Velazquez attended the RRT VI meeting for the first time. He emphasized that if DOD emergency support is needed, approval must come from NORTHCOM.

Dept of State – No Report (Not Present)

Dept of Justice – No Report (Not Present)

Dept of Transportation – No Report (Not Present)

Dept of Health and Human Services – No Report (Not Present)

FEMA/DHS

Ms. Lori LaFon reported that FEMA, like must other RRT member agencies, had been and still was, heavily involved in hurricane response actions from the 2004 hurricane season. The FEMA National Preparedness Group completed an “all-hazard” Comprehensive HAZMAT Emergency Response-Capability Assessment Program (CHER-CAP) pilot project in North Louisiana. The final exercise reports have been completed and forwarded to FEMA headquarters for review. The agency has started a continuity of operations (COOP), train the trainer program in San Antonio, TX. FEMA is also organizing DHS partnership meetings. Eight partnership meetings will be conducted in Region VI to identify principal partners.

Dept of Homeland Security

CAPT Branch reported that December 31, 2004 marked the deadline for all marine transportation facilities (MTR) to be in full compliance with their waterfront facility security plans. The Eighth District has approximately 40% of the total waterfront facilities, 1400 facilities, nationwide. The next deadline July 1, 2005, is for the commercial fleet. The Coast Guard inspected fleet has to be examined and in full compliance with their security plans by this deadline. CAPT Branch also reported that the Eighth Coast Guard District has a newly commissioned Marine Safety and Security Team (MSST) consisting of a seventy person team with fast response boats in New Orleans. The New Orleans team is the second MSST in the Eighth District, the other MSST is based in Galveston.

General Services Administration (GSA); Mr. Dan Crawford

The GSA in-house tag team has conducted several COOP exercises within the agency. GSA has teamed with EPA to conduct additional exercises though out the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The agency responded throughout the region to several FEMA requests for assistance during the hurricane season.

Department of Labor (DOL); Mr. Luis Villanueva

DOL/OSHA has run several COOP exercises within the agency in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Nationally, DOL has published a Second Receivers Document for hospitals and health care workers. DOL has put together a traveling response team based in Atlanta. The team recently responded in a South Florida hurricane site.

They inspected the crews that were doing the demolitions and burn piles in disaster areas, to ensure health and safety standard plans were followed. If issues of concern were not addressed by the work crews then DOL would inform FEMA and the workers were removed from the sites.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission – No Report (Not Present)

STATE AGENCY REPORTS

Arkansas – No Report (Not Present)

Louisiana

Ms. Karolien DeBusschere, (LOSCO) reported that her agency will be meeting with other state agencies to review and update the State emergency contingency plan.

New Mexico

State Emergency Management field offices are participating in local emergency planning committees. Over the past four years, the number of reported hazardous material incidents has decreased.

Oklahoma

State emergency response agencies have gained much from the CHER-CAP and the Emergency Response Review programs. There have been four reviews conducted within the state with positive outcomes. We would like to continue our support of the Communications program between the business community, Federal, State and local agencies.

Texas - TCEQ

Mr. Jeff Lewellin, TCEQ, thanked the RRT for the opportunity to showcase their agency's hazardous materials response command center during the meeting. The agency's command center and other representative equipment was staged in the hotel parking lot. Ms. Lori Wooten was introduced as the newly appointed RRT VI alternate representative for TCEQ. Mr. Lewellin reviewed the different types of training provided by TCEQ to the local LEPC's. TCEQ explained changes in their areas of responsibilities.

Texas - TGLO

Mr. Greg Pollock reported that the number of reported oil spills in Texas coastal waters have declined for the third year in a row, however a rash of large oil spills occurred during the latter part of 2004. The newly revised Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response tool kit on CD, which includes the Coast Guard's "One Gulf Plan", is available to the public. Two new bilge reclamation facilities are open, in Port O'Connor and Galveston. Since the inception of the reclamation program, approximately 800,000 gallons of oily water and 600,000 gallons of recycled engine oil have been processed. A new piece of State legislation is expected within the next couple of weeks, to assist TGLO in the removal of abandoned vessels in Texas.

Texas - Railroad Commission

Mr. William Meyer stated that his agency is the regulator for the oil and gas industry. The oil field cleanup program is continuing to grow. During 2004, the agency had identified 300 abandoned oil fields with approximately 1500 wells that need to be plugged.

NEAR SHORE ENVIROMENT DISPERSANT EXPEDITED APPROVAL PROCESS – Karolien DeBusschere (Louisiana)

Ms. DeBusschere, RRT VI, Preparedness Committee chairperson, discussed how the committee was tasked to focus specifically on the near shore environments in the case of dispersant application.

As a result the committee has developed the Expedited Approval Process for the Near Shore Environments. Development of the document was done with the cooperation of State stakeholders who provided their concerns and issues associated with using near shore dispersants. With this information and other expertise, the committee came up with a protocol to develop the Expedited Approval Process, which was delivered last year to the RRT. Direction was provided by the RRT to refine that document, which is what you have in front of you to review today. Ms. DeBusschere went over the document and explained how it works and what forms will be required to be filled out if you plan to use the document. The document is intended to facilitate the timely use of dispersants for near shore/time critical oil spill response. The RRT will provide approval on a case- by-case basis. An After Action Report will be required, as is for the “Offshore Dispersant Pre-Approval Plan”. She went on to explain that this document is not a pre-approval for the FOSC but a tool in decision making. The RRT was asked to vote on the approval of the document. The RRT approved the use of the “Offshore Dispersant Pre-Approval Plan”.

FISH, WILDLIFE, SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS PLAN ANNEX–Dr. Steve Spencer (DOI)

One of the gaps in the inland Regional Integrated Contingency Plan is an annex call the “Fish and Wildlife Sensitive Plan”, required by the National Contingency Plan. At the last RRT meeting in June 2004, Dr. Spencer provided RRT members a copy of a draft annex asking for comments. Since that time Dr. Spencer has received very few comments from other RRT member agencies and no comments from the RRT VI member States. Dr. Spencer then distributed, to the state RRT representatives and also the Federal Agency RRT representatives that have a natural resource interest (NOAA, DOC, USCG, EPA), a final draft of the “Fish and Wildlife Sensitive Plan” for their comments. Dr. Spencer requested agency points of contacts within the states that have direct involvement with fish and wildlife, plus local, state and national sensitive areas. Dr. Spencer has been working on developing a national database of sensitive areas and sensitive species. A portion of the database, consisting of resources of concern for Federal agencies, has been completed. Dr. Spencer requested additional information from the RRT member states about their respective designated refuges and sanctuaries, to include endangered and threatened species.

HURRICANE IVAN OFFSHORE FACILITY DAMAGE–Rusty Wright (MMS)

Mr. Rusty Wright passed out a MMS point of contact listing in the case of a natural disaster which impacts MMS’s area of responsibility. His presentation covered the damage caused offshore by Hurricane Ivan including a description of the assets that were damaged.

CG FOSC PRESENTATIONS

MSO Mobile

CAPT Steve Hardy emphasized the importance of hurricane pre-planning meetings within the emergency response community to discuss the criteria for evacuation notification, potential Command Post locations, and post-disaster communication requirements. CAPT Hardy's presentation included pictures of the destruction within Mobile's area of responsibility (AOR) as a result of Hurricane IVAN. He talked about the importance of using the Gulf Strike Team as a consultant to assist in setting up the Incident Command Structure (ICS).

MSO New Orleans

CAPT Frank Paskewich emphasized the importance of preparedness efforts for potential hurricane impact contingencies and post hurricane impact responses. CAPT Paskewich's presentation addressed post Hurricane IVAN responses including his unit's response to a ruptured pipeline oil spill in South Louisiana.

The response required mechanical recovery and dispersant application. An incident-specific RRT was convened to authorize the application of dispersant in an area bordering upon nearshore waters and resources. Approval was granted and dispersants were applied via boat (night operations) and aircraft for daytime operations.

MSO Morgan City

CAPT Terry Gilbreath reported that MSO Morgan City did not have any major responses during the last six months. The MSO receives an average of 150 National Response Center (NRC) notifications per month. Most of the NRC notifications are small offshore oil spills but because of the volume reported CAPT Gilbreath's staff spends a significant quantity of time reacting to the notifications. One pipeline rupture resulted in a significant quantity of time and effort to identify the responsible party (RP). In the absence of a RP, MSO response personnel initiated response action using the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. CAPT Gilbreath reported on several salvage operations, including the salvage of a "jack-up" barge. MSO Morgan City had to cancel a Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) exercise because of Hurricane IVAN.

MSO Port Arthur

CAPT Sharon Richey reported that MSO Port Arthur has moved to a new location in the Central Park Mall and invited RRT members to stop by during "open house." She also talked about the new Vessel Traffic System (VTS) that is being installed at the MSO. The completion date of the VTS is anticipated to be the first of October 2005. The CAPT talked about the continuation of military out-load taking place in her area of responsibility. CAPT Richie provided a brief on her unit's response to the oil spill caused by the collision between the tank vessel TORM MARY and the towing vessel Tomas pushing the Buffalo Barge 405. Approximately 600 barrels of #6 oil spilled into the river. The response was challenging because of the river current and hot weather conditions.

MSO Houston

CAPT Richard Kaser reported on the tank vessel IEVOLI SPLENDOR oil spill near the Houston Ship Channel. Although the spilled oil migrated to several natural collection points in the area several passing ships had their hulls oiled and needed to be cleaned. At the request of the FOSC, an incident-specific RRT was convened to request the use of a "Surface Washing Agent" to clean the vessel hulls.

The RRT granted permission to use the agent and asked for an After Action Report to document the product's usefulness for that particular application. The Houston/Galveston Area Committee is in the final stages of approving designated areas where surface washing agents can be utilized without incident-specific RRT approval. MSO Houston will be executing a PREP Area exercise in December 2005.

MSO Corpus Christi

CAPT Lincoln Stroh reported he has been involved with several different RRT's but this is his first RRT VI meeting. CAPT Stroh has placed particular emphasis at MSO Corpus Christi in the area of Prevention and Response. An aggressive training program has resulted in an increase in the number of FOSCR and pollution investigators. The MSO has reinvigorated participation within the Area Committees by establishing several committee work groups, each of which is establishing goals and objectives for the next year. The marine firefighting work group may be of particular interest to the RRT. A marine fighting forum will be held in late June in Corpus Christi and everyone is invited.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIATE COMMITTEE UPDATE

CAPT Branch reported that the committee had a meeting the evening of January 25th to discuss editorial changes to the RRT VI by-laws. The changes will have no major effects to the content of the by-laws. Mr. Steve Mason, EPA, made the changes after the meeting and the amended by-laws were passed out to RRT VI members. The Captain asked all members to review the by-laws (changes) for a vote at 12:00 on January 26th for the acceptance of the revised by-laws.

M/V ATHOS I

CDR Peter Gautier, Commanding Officer of the Gulf Strike Team, reported on the subject oil spill, which occurred in Philadelphia, PA. This major spill of 265,000 gallons of crude oil, was one of the largest responses in the history of the U.S. The incident was caused by a breach in the ship's hull due to an allision with a heavy submerged object in the channel of unknown origin. Some of oil submerged in the river making it difficult to track and cleanup. CDR Gautier emphasized that the Unified Command worked very well and attributed the cohesiveness of the various response agencies during the response to their experience during recent area exercises.

LADEQ

Mr. Jeff Meyers and Bruce Hammitt talked about air quality and monitoring in the Baton Rouge area. Mr. Hammitt talked about identifying causes of poor air quality in and around the Louisiana's state capitol. Air monitoring devices have been placed throughout the capitol. The poor air quality is attributed to petrochemical plants, railcars, and barge traffic. During the discussion the State of Louisiana (LADEQ) formerly requested assistance with the identification of the types of hazardous substances loaded into barges that move on the Mississippi River through the Baton Rouge area. The Coast Guard agreed to investigate the issue and reply to LADEQ.

USEPA PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Richard Franklin, OSC, reported that 2004 was a very busy year for EPA, over 300 incidences reported in the last six months. Some of the different types of incidents were train derailments, general hazmat (chemical), fires, and many other oil related spills. He pointed out the successful partnering relationship between sister federal and state response agencies. Mr. Franklin talked about what triggers EPA to send OSC's to the field. He also discussed notification processes and procedures within the EPA. Mr. Craig Carroll talked about EPA notification in case of a release or oil spill (inland). Mr. Carroll talked about the digitized maps indicating EPA/USCG boundaries that EPA has generated. This topic will be further discussed during the Summer RRT VI meeting.

NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN (NRP); CDR Valley/LCDR Dan Norton (HQ)

CDR Valley initiated the discussion with a presentation that covered the general framework and components of the National Response Plan. CDR Valley talked about the on-line FEMA course, IS-800, which provides students with a better understanding of the NRP. CDR Valley stated that the NRP does not remove or change any Federal emergency response agency authority or responsibilities. LCDR Dan Norton talked about the NRP implementation within the Federal government. LCDR Norton described a three-phase implementation cycle: Transitional Period (0-60 days from the signature date of December 2004), Plan Modification (60 to 120 days), and Initial Implementation and Testing (120 days to 1 year). Several seminars (Roll-Out) will be conducted in cities across the country in the Spring to introduce Federal, State and Local participants to the NRP.

INLAND RIVER VESSEL MOVEMENT CENTER (IRVMC)

LT Kevin Lynn, USCG D8, reported on IRVMC and how the information collected enhances the Coast Guard's Maritime Domain Awareness on the inland rivers. IRVMC collects and tracks information related to the movement of barges carrying Certain Dangerous Cargos (CDC's).

FEDERAL INCIDENT RESPONSE SUPPORT TEAM (FIRST)

Lee Foresman, from the National Strike Force Coordination Center (NSFCC), provided a brief description of his role in the development of the concept and operating procedures for this new deployable resource to support the Federal Response to Incidents of National Significance as introduced in the National Response Plan.

MTSA PLANNING REQUIREMENTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED CONTINGENCY PLAN

Mr. Staves briefed the RRT on the initial development of the ICP guidance. Include the security requirements and review the feasibility of developing an electronic version of the

SPECIAL MONITORING OF APPLIED RESPONSE TECHNOLOGIES (SMART) PROTOCOL DISCUSSION

Mr. Charlie Henry summarized his discussion and deferred details until a later meeting. Mr. Henry will be meeting with the stakeholders that operate under the protocol or who are customers of this alternative response effectiveness monitoring system at the IOSC to discuss changes in the protocol. Based upon discussions during that meeting Mr. Henry will generate a draft document for distribution and comment. More information will follow this process.

MARINE FIRE FIGHTING TASK FORCE

Captain Kaser, Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Houston, briefed the RRT membership and guests regarding a Houston-based task force made up of local fire department members that responds to maritime facility fires in the Houston area.

TEXAS OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. Chuck McCormick, Deputy Director of the Texas Office of Homeland Security, gave an informative and inspiring speech on the mission and accomplishments of his state agency. His illustrative stories and concise comments conveyed the challenges all Federal and State agencies face when preventing, preparing for, and responding to emergencies.